

Blissful Marriage

A Practical Islamic Guide

[NEW EDITION]

Drs. Ekram and M. Rida Beshir

amana publications

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Preface | xii |
| Introduction | 1 |
| 1. Family Crises in North America and Their Impact on Muslim Families | 10 |
| Introduction | 10 |
| Shocking Facts | 13 |
| Canadian Statistics | 13 |
| United States Statistics | 19 |
| Impact on Muslim Families | 22 |
| What To Do: A Word of Advice | 22 |
| 2. Main Objectives of Marriage | 24 |
| Introduction | 24 |
| Stronger Faith | 25 |
| Examples From the <i>Seerah</i> : | |
| <i>Abu Addahdah</i> and <i>Um Addahdah</i> | 28 |
| The Evening Visitor | 30 |
| Other Objectives of Marriage | 32 |
| Realizing and Fulfilling the <i>Sunnah</i> of Creation (Pairing) | 32 |
| Procreation | 32 |
| <i>Ihssun</i> | 33 |
| Fulfilling and Satisfying the Parenthood Instinct in Human Beings | 33 |
| Progress and Advancement of Human Race | 33 |
| Stronger Society | 33 |
| Proper Distribution of Tasks & Responsibilities | 34 |
| 3. The Process of Selection | 35 |
| Introduction | 34 |
| <i>Qur'anic</i> Advice Regarding Process of Selection | 36 |
| The Prophet's Advice | 37 |
| The North American Situation | 42 |
| How Parents and Community Can Help | 43 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Matching Questionnaires | 45 |
| Male Matching Questionnaire | 47 |
| Female Matching Questionnaire | 58 |
| How to Make Best Use of This Questionnaire | 73 |
| Final Word Concerning Questionnaires | 74 |
| Marriage From the People of the Book | 75 |
| The Condition Stated in the Verse | 75 |
| The Practice of the Early Muslims | 76 |
| Muslims in North America are a Minority | 76 |
| The Reality of the North American Condition | 77 |
| The Impact on Muslim Women | 77 |
| A Word of Caution | 77 |

4. Tried and Proven Recipes for a Successful Marriage 79

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Introduction | 79 |
| Ingredients | 79 |
| The Seven Essential 'C's | 80 |
| Commitment | 80 |
| Courtesy | 82 |
| Communication | 83 |
| Care | 86 |
| Contentment | 87 |
| Contribution | 91 |
| Compromise | 92 |
| The Seven Magical 'S's | 94 |
| Sensitivity | 94 |
| Sincerity | 97 |
| Security | 97 |
| Support | 99 |
| Satisfaction | 100 |
| Sharing | 102 |
| Sexual Gratification | 103 |
| The Five Wonderful 'A's | 112 |
| Adaptation | 112 |
| Accommodation | 113 |
| Appreciation | 113 |
| Anticipation | 116 |
| Acceptance | 117 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Other Ingredients and Qualities | 118 |
| <i>Rahmah</i> (meaning compassion, leniency, and kindness) | 118 |
| Love | 121 |
| Forgiveness | 126 |
| Trust and Faithfulness | 130 |
| Open Mindedness and Understanding | 132 |
| Respect | 133 |
| Patience | 135 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Tested and Proven Recipes for Various Occasions | 141 |
| Vacation Recipe | 141 |
| Visiting In-Laws Recipe | 142 |
| During Pregnancy and Delivery Time | 142 |
| During Conflicts | 143 |
| During Overseas Travel to Visit Family | 143 |
| During Exams and Study Periods | 144 |
| During Shopping Trips | 144 |

5. Family Dynamics and Family atmosphere 146

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Introduction | 146 |
| How to Attain This Atmosphere | 147 |
| Things to Do | 147 |
| Things to Avoid | 147 |

6. Essential Spousal Obligations159

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | 159 |
| Essential Shared Obligations | 160 |
| Help Each Other be Better Muslims | 160 |
| Treat Each Other With Respect, Kindness, and Compassion | 162 |
| Fulfill Each Other's Physical Intimate Needs and Desires | 164 |
| Provide Good Companionship | 167 |
| Proper Understanding of the <i>Qawamah</i> Concept | 168 |
| Proper Understanding of the Status of Women in Islam | 170 |
| Some Essential Wife's Obligations | 179 |
| Main Caregiver of the Children | 180 |
| Obedience | 181 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Acceptance and Respect of the Husband's <i>Qawamah</i> | 184 |
| Some Essential Husband's Obligations | 184 |
| Main Financial Supporter of Family | 185 |
| Serving and Helping | 186 |
| Proper Use of <i>Qawamah</i> and Proper Fulfillment of <i>Qawamah's</i> Responsibility | 188 |
| 7. (TAZKEIATU ANNAFS) Purifying and Cleansing | 192 |
| Introduction | 192 |
| Definition of <i>Tazkeiatu Annafs</i> | 192 |
| <i>The Qur'an</i> and <i>Tazkeiah</i> | 193 |
| <i>The Sunnah</i> and <i>Tazkeiah</i> | 195 |
| Process of <i>Tazkeiah</i> | 199 |
| Be at Peace with Yourself | 205 |
| Making Commitment " <i>Mo'ahadah</i> " | 205 |
| Watching Over Oneself " <i>Moraqabah</i> " | 206 |
| Reviewing, Assessing, and Evaluating One's Actions " <i>Mohasabah</i> " | 207 |
| Punishing Oneself for Mistakes Committed " <i>Mo'aqabah</i> " | 210 |
| Striving for the Best " <i>Mojahadah</i> " | 211 |
| Self-search | 212 |
| Sample Checklist for Husbands | 213 |
| Sample Checklist for Wives | 214 |
| Proper Islamic Conflict Resolution | 215 |
| Islamic Guidelines for Conflict Resolution | 217 |
| Take Initiative | 217 |
| Forgive and Forget | 218 |
| Control Your Anger | 221 |
| No Name-Calling | 223 |
| Practical Steps for Conflict Resolution | 224 |
| 8. Common Marital Problems (Case studies) | 227 |
| 1. My wife talks too much | 227 |
| 2. I would love to help my husband be a grateful son to his mom, but! | 228 |
| 3. The Sister-in-law Dilemma | 229 |
| 4. If you don't eat it warm, you don't understand a thing!! | 230 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 5. I feel like we are growing apart | 231 |
| 6. He only thinks of his parents | 233 |
| 7. My husband is rarely home | 234 |
| 8. I can't enjoy a thing around him | 234 |
| 9. Where did my wife go? | 235 |
| 9. Anatomy of Problems (Case studies) | 237 |
| 1. My wife talks too much | 237 |
| 2. I would love to help my husband be a grateful son to his mom, but! | 239 |
| 3. The Sister in-law Dilemma | 245 |
| 4. If you don't eat it warm, you don't understand a thing!! | 248 |
| 5. I feel like we are growing apart | 250 |
| 6. He only thinks of his parents | 254 |
| 7. My husband is rarely home | 257 |
| 8. I can't enjoy a thing around him | 259 |
| 9. Where did my wife go? | 262 |
| 10. Family Stages: The Husband/Wife Relationship at Different Stages | 265 |
| Introduction | 265 |
| The Sweet, Critical Two | 265 |
| Forming a Family, the Stage of Having Children | 268 |
| Pregnancy and Delivery | 268 |
| Children Take Over | 270 |
| The School Years | 273 |
| The Teen Years | 274 |
| The Empty Nest: Children Leaving Home, Parents Left Alone | 276 |
| 11. Further Tips | 279 |
| Arabic Terminology | 285 |
| References | 290 |

SAAW who narrated his sayings, it means 'may Allah be pleased with him.'

1 - Family Crises in North America And Their Impact on Muslim Families

Introduction

In the preface of his book, *The Challenge of Marriage*, Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs analyzes the present situation of the American family, saying:

"Since the publication of this book, certain trends, suggested then, are now a commonplace in our contemporary scene. The conflicts and tensions that disrupt the harmony and even threaten the survival of individual marriages have increased in frequency and intensity.

However, our American family is not disintegrating despite all its shortcomings. It is true that sexual satisfaction is lacking in many marriages; and they often fail to provide the proper stimulation and guidance for children to grow and mature socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Since these are considered as two crucial functions in marriage, many begin to question the usefulness of this institution. This seems to be unwarranted.

We suggest that the family is not disintegrating, but it rather faced with a serious dilemma. It is the result of the democratic evolution with its concomitant process of equalization. Tradition has not prepared us for it.

"Without knowledge and skill in coping with each other in a democratic atmosphere, our families become a battleground, torn by tension, antagonisms and hostilities. Husbands and wives find it difficult to get along peacefully. Under the impact of the ensuing warfare in which the children fully participate, their marital relationship can often be strained to the breaking point. Instead of being an element of unification, children often become an almost unsolvable disrupting influence."

He also emphasized the following: “In the past, men, in exclusive possession of political and social power, established the social conventions to their liking and benefit. The women had to conform and abide

“Women now have become the arbiters and censors, the custodian of morals and mares, imposing their rules of ‘proper conduct’ on men and on society as a whole. Today the wives complain that their husbands don’t behave properly, in a socially accepted way. They either are too passive, aloof, and withdrawn, or too aggressive and domineering. This desire of women to be perfect, to be right, leaves neither husbands nor children to be good enough. An increasing number of boys grow up with the mistaken conviction that in order to be a real man, one has to be ‘bad’ or fight.

American women try so hard to be ‘good’. One has to define what this goodness means. It is no longer purity, chastity, and virtue, traditionally expected and demanded from women. Women don’t want necessarily to be chaste; they want to be proper. Being proper, socially correct, becomes a widely accepted idea for women.

The sexual mares for this country will greatly depend on the attitude and conventions that women will develop and establish. At the present time, they either try to impose on men the demand for fidelity and chastity, previously only required from women; or they arrogate to themselves the same license and sexual freedom that men enjoyed through out the ages.

Another trend that has become more pronounced is the emancipation of children. It is becoming increasingly obvious that adults have lost their power and authority over children, who have gained a sense of freedom and self-determination. However, while children become free to do as they decide, they often don’t develop a sense of responsibility. Freedom without responsibility can be a

considerable social threat. Many parents become permissive, out of a sincere desire not to be autocratic.

The cultural inability to live with each other as equals, is most painfully felt in our closest relationship, in marriage. The confusion and vacillation is merely the result of democratic changes. of our grouping for a new relationship, which eventually will be based on equal status for all.”

A few crucial points can be deducted from the above analysis:

- The family institution in North America is faced with a serious dilemma.
- There is a continuous power struggle between the two genders to dictate the social convention of the society. Whichever gender group has the opportunity to develop and establish such conventions does so for its own benefit and liking. In the past, it was men, and now, it is women.
- Equal status for all is the answer for social stability, peace, and harmony within the family.
- The disintegration of family is having very serious effects on children’s behaviors. Of course, these effects all lead in the wrong direction. To put it in Dr’s Dreikurs words, these new behaviors are a “considerable social threat.” This is clearly seen in popular teen culture, which is characterized, by individualism, physical indulgence, and complete lack of respect for authority, to mention just a few characteristics.

Shocking Facts

Canadian Statistics

According to the Canadian Press, the latest census numbers from Statistics Canada suggest that the 2001 Canadian census shows that the word traditional no longer describes the universal ideal for families in metropolitan areas or in Canada as a whole.

“The proportion of so-called traditional families - married couples with children - has declined in Halifax over the last five years, according to information from the 2001 census released yesterday. This mirrors the national trend.

The latest census figures show that married couples with children account for 37.6 per cent of the 100,650 families in Halifax, down from 42.3 per cent in the 1996 census. Married couples with no children in 2001 represented 33.4 per cent of total families, while in 1996 it was 31.7 per cent.

Couples in common-law relationships in Halifax make up a higher proportion of families compared to the last census. The number of common-law couples with no children was 8.2 per cent in 2001, compared to 6.8 per cent in the 1996 census. Common-law couples with children represent 4.3 per cent of all families, compared to 3.5 per cent from five years ago. A total of 16.6 per cent of Halifax families were lone-parent families.

The new census data also lists 510 same-sex families in Halifax (0.51 per cent of total families).

On a national level, the census indicates the composition of the Canadian family structure continues to diversify.

The new data shows that married couples with children account for 37.4 per cent of Canadian families, a decrease from 41.3 per cent in 1996. Married couples without children make up 33.1 per cent of the families, up from 32.4 per cent. There is an increase in the number of common-law couples, with or without children (13.8 per cent from 11.7 per cent). The number of lone-parent families accounts for 15.7 per cent while same-sex couples account for 0.41 per cent of all Canadian families.

Statistics Canada says there are several known factors behind the changing numbers: fertility rates are lower, couples are delaying having children and more just aren't having children at all. In

addition, Canadians are living longer so couples have more of their years to spend together as empty-nesters after raising their children. And marital or common-law breakups often create two smaller households.

Nova Scotia and Quebec have the highest proportions of older people in Canada. Nova Scotia's median age rose to 38.8 years from 33.4 between 1996 and 2001.

Nova Scotia has the lowest proportion of couples with kids living at home in the country, which is linked to the older population.

The proportion of couples without children under 25 at home rose to 43 per cent in 2001 from 39 in 1996.”⁵

The major newspaper of the nation's capital, The Ottawa Citizen, on October 23rd, 2002 reported the following:

“Canadians appear wedded to relationships even though the institution of marriage continues to slip in popularity, according to the latest census numbers from Statistics Canada, which, for the first time, counted same-sex couples living together.

The agency released data yesterday on Canadian families and households that show the traditional family grouping of mom, pop and the two kids had been overtaken by 2001 by an aging population and a dramatic shift in living arrangements.

Same-sex, common-law partners were only a tiny slice of the shifting scene, accounting for 0.5 per cent of all Canadian couples.

The data say households consisting of four or more people -- what we once thought of as the typical family -- had shrunk to one in four in 2001, as opposed to one in three two decades earlier.

⁵The Canadian Press, October 23rd, 2002